



Solidarity

For social ownership of the banks and industry

No 416 13 September 2016 50p/£1



DON'T BRING BACK THE 11-PLUS!

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The arrival of any new secondary school alters the local educational ecology. The arrival of an entirely selective school has a particularly damaging effect. It drastically recasts the intake of all other schools in an area, and at a stroke turns them, however they are named, into secondary moderns.

Maintaining a high level of attainment in public exams is made more difficult for these schools. They find it harder to secure their League Table position. OfSTED penalises them. These are the schools most children within a selective system will attend.

In this way the expansion of grammar schools will bring back the old "11-plus system" where the majority of children were consigned to a second-class education — a narrow curriculum and low expectations.

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Junior doctors set for 5 Oct

By Charlotte Zalens

Junior doctors will strike over the government's imposition of an unfair, and unsafe contract on 5, 6, 7, and 10-11 October.

Further five-day, all-out strikes on 14-18 November and 5-9 December are planned if the imposition of the contract is not halted.

A number of Constituency Labour Parties have submitted a motion on the NHS to Labour Party conference (24-28 September). The motion would commit Labour to "wholeheartedly supporting junior doctors' and health workers' fight to defend themselves and the NHS." The fight against privatisation and to renationalise the NHS must include workers' struggles as well as those of community groups against hospital closures and privatisations. The junior doctors' fight is our fight.

Labour and Momentum activists can show their support for junior doctors and for the strikes in October by organising visits to local hospitals and meetings to meet and talk to junior doctors ahead of the strike.

They can also organise for emails of support to be sent to the BMA from local labour movement organisations.

Junior doctors are right to fight the imposition of a contract that aims for Jeremy Hunt's so-called "seven-day NHS". On Sunday 11 September Chris Hopson, chief executive of NHS Providers (the organisation that represents hospitals in England) said that a 7-



day elective NHS is impossible with current funding levels. He also said that "unless urgent funding is provided [hospitals] will have to cut staff, bring in charges or introduce "draconian rationing" of treatment, for example, of non-urgent operations."

80% of England's acute hospitals are in financial deficit, compared with 5% three years ago. Missed A&E waiting time targets have risen from 10% to 90%. This is a service that cannot be spread thinner to cover elective care on the weekend.

The junior doctors' union, the British Medical Association (BMA) had called a strike for 12-16 September. This was called off over fears about patient safety. An onslaught of negative coverage in the press has complicated, confused the issues and scared some junior doctors.

Confidence needs to be rebuilt among junior doctors who have shown by voting for action that they are not happy with the imposed contract and want to fight it.

• Send messages of support to: jdcchair@bma.org.uk

What will Syrian ceasefire mean?

By Simon Nelson

A new ceasefire in Syria has been brokered jointly by the US and Russia.

Unfortunately, this is unlikely to bring any lasting peace. Initially set to hold for 48 hours from the evening of Monday 12 September, it may be extended. The terms are based on negotiations at an international conference in February.

The current agreement has been cautiously welcomed by sections of Syrian rebels, but they are highly critical of the lack of monitoring or safeguards. Many groups, including the Free Syrian Army (FSA) alliance, Ahrar al-Sham, and Jaish al-Islam have called the deal "unjust", but stopped short of fully rejecting it.

Under the terms joint US-Russian action will be taken against Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, the one-time Al

Qaeda affiliate.

But Jabhat Fateh al-Sham's break with Al Qaeda appears to have allowed them to gain a further foothold amongst the more moderate Islamist groups who continue to dominate the military and political opposition to Assad. One of the largest of these is Ahrar al-Sham, and they have increased their collaboration with Jabhat Fateh al-Sham.

Their spokesman Mostafa Mahamed wrote on Twitter that, "It's simple — the Russian-American deal is intended to eliminate those who protect Syrians."

"The negotiations and the deals which do not take account of fighters on the ground are useless."

When such groups claim to protect Syrians, they include only those Syrians who subscribe to their doctrine — a narrow Salafist interpretation of Islam. However within many rebel held areas they

are an increasingly dominant force, and for many Sunni Syrians they appear to be the only force capable of repelling government and Russian attacks. Calls by the US for Syrians to stop supporting these groups without any alternative source of protection from Assad is likely to be met with hostility.

It looks as if the deal is almost solely targeted at Aleppo, with no guarantees or monitoring confirmed in any other areas. Yet aid to be distributed in all besieged areas is vital to avoid further starvation. With no guarantee of this, a small lull in Russian-backed bombing will make only a small impact.

If joint action by the US and Russia can now more legitimately target rebel-held areas on the grounds of removing groups both the US and Russia are hostile to, the deal could potentially allow the regime to consolidate its power-bases.

Stop arming Saudi Arabia!

By Keith Road

Ministry of Defence figures show the UK defence industries are ahead of those of Russia, France, Germany and Israel in the arms exporter table, lagging behind only the USA.

Over 60% of UK arms sales go to the Middle East, 16% go to North America, 13% to Asia Pacific and 8% to Europe.

The UK trades with 39 of the 51 governments outlawed by Freedom House's Freedom in the World Report, including 22 countries that are on the UK's own human rights watch list!

UK Trade & Investment (UKTI), the Government's agency in charge of promoting British business abroad, has championed the UK's long-term leading role in arming dictatorships and supporting political suppression:

"The UK is one of the world's most successful defence exporters, averaging second place in the global rankings on a rolling ten-year basis, making it Europe's leading defence exporter in the period."

UKTI employ more staff in their specialist defence unit in any of the other 45 sectors that they represent. But their endeavours to increase sales of arms and other defence-related products and services have come under particular scrutiny recently because Saudi Arabia remains one of the UK's biggest clients.

A cross party committee of MPs to monitor arms export controls has had a draft report leaked; it includes strong condemnation of continued arms sales to Saudi Ara-



Saudi airstrike on water well in Sanaa, Yemen (September 2015).

bia: "The weight of evidence of violations of international humanitarian law by the Saudi-led coalition is now so great that it is very difficult to continue to support Saudi Arabia."

Unsurprisingly "pro defence" Labour and Tory MPs have united to water down criticism of a "key ally." The *Guardian* reports that over 130 amendments were proposed by Crispin Blunt the committee chair, alongside veteran Labour right winger John Spellar. Their attempts to wreck the report were backed up by Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson releasing a statement defending the continued sales, and putting the Government's view that there is no evidence of breaches of international law and this "key test" had not been met in, for instance, the bombing of the Iranian backed Houthi rebels in

Yemen.

These MPs have now refused to discuss whether they coordinated a walk out of the committee to ensure it was not quorate and thus stop it from voting on its proposals. In a pathetic attempt to undermine criticism, Crispin Blunt has said the leak of the information is so serious that private investigators should be called into Parliament to investigate how it happened.

Since the 15 August bombing of a Yemeni hospital which saw Medecins Sans Frontieres pull out of large swathes of the conflict zone, the Saudis have come under increasing pressure account for their conduct.

Saudi Arabia's continued bombing of Yemen should be opposed. The UK should stop arming Saudi Arabia.

The right to be raucous

By Colin Foster

An activist in the RMT rail union reports to us that when she proposed a collection for the Ritzy cinema workers in her (left-wing) union branch, some objected (though unsuccessfully) on the grounds of it putting pressure on people to donate who might not be able to afford it.

In the Labour Party, left-wing activists have been suspended and denounced as hate-filled bigots because of critical comments on Twitter or Facebook about Labour right-wingers.

In Australia, it is now standard practice at the National Union of Students annual "Queer Collaborations" conference for participants to be required to sign an undertaking that they will not argue with other participants, because such behaviour might cause offence or make people feel unsafe.

None of this stops racist harassment in wider society, or workers being bullied by managers. But it is a sign that conservative forces in the labour and student movements are learning how to use left-sounding buzzwords — safe spaces, tolerance, avoiding pressure — to stifle the left.

And employers, too. For three

years now the big global container-terminal operator DP World has been running a scheme called The Compass — posters, seminars, "town hall meetings". They declare against "bullying and harassment".

Wearing a union "touch one, touch all" sticker has been deemed "offensive". Swearing is also an offence. A union delegate who at a sausage sizzle said jokingly that it was two sausages for union members and none for non-members was hauled up on disciplinary charges.

At the DP World terminal in Brisbane, over 20 workers have been called in for interviews with a former Federal Police officer.

Words which Karl Marx wrote in 1842, in response to a government decree which said that critical writing was permissible, but only if it was modest and serious, ring true today:

"You do not demand that the rose should smell like the violet, but must the greatest riches of all, the spirit, exist in only one variety? I am humorous, but the law bids me write seriously. I am audacious, but the law commands that my style be modest..."

"The essence of the spirit is always truth itself; but what do you make its essence? Modesty..."

Labour: demand due process! Boundary stitch-up

By Simon Nelson

The key task for Labour Party activists who want to oppose the summary suspension and expulsion of members which we have seen over the last few weeks is to demand an immediate review of all these cases, on the grounds of natural justice.

We also want the reinstatement of those who have been excluded simply for expressing left-wing and socialist views.

That broad political message is spelt out in a resolution from Broxtowe Labour Party to the upcoming Labour Party Conference:

"We believe that, however our rules change, we need to ensure they are carried out in a spirit consistent with a democratic culture. As the Chakrabarti report argues, 'the Labour Party should seek to

uphold the strongest principles of natural justice', 'due process' and 'proportionality'.

"Expulsion and suspensions should not be used as a factional weapon. Everyone should be properly informed of the charges against them in writing – not via the press! – and given a hearing before any penalty, and there should be a proper appeals system.

"Anyone willing to genuinely support Labour should be welcome, subject to our rules. Previous left-wing political activity should be of no relevance; neither should membership or support of particular organisations or currents."

The Labour Party claims that only 3107 people (as of 7 September) have been barred from voting in the leadership election. This seems lower than the volume of reports from members and activists.



Chakrabarti: set out principles

It also remains unclear how the cases for suspensions are being made, who is deciding on cases, and how any "evidence" is gathered.

Any suspension without due process is one too many — even that of Michael Foster, the millionaire Labour donor who used his wealth to challenge Corbyn's right to be on the ballot in court, then branded Corbyn supporters as Sturmabteilung (stormtroopers), no less. While it may be tempting to see hypocritical right wingers suffer the same punishment as many Corbyn supporters, a tit-for-tat round of expulsions and suspensions would be negative and would damage our goal of an open, pluralist party.

Nothing less than a complete review of the process is needed.

Over 1000 Labour Party activists have now signed the Stop the Purge statement demanding that the Labour Party is an open regime where disagreements and political issues are discussed as they should be — by members, in organised debates, — and this debate is used to decide policy.

- [stopthelabourpurge.wordpress.com/](#)
- More on exclusions, page 10.

By Rhodri Evans

On 12 September the Boundary Commission presented its plans for new parliamentary constituencies in England.

A process of consultation now starts, to be completed in September 2018 so the new boundaries can be used for the 2020 general election.

This redrawing of boundaries is more drastic than previous ones. There has been a long time since the last review (completed in 2007: another review in 2011 was aborted by conflicts within the Tory/ Lib-Dem coalition government). Tory

legislation now requires the total number of seats to be reduced and boundaries to be drawn in to make constituency electorates as equal as possible.

Lots of people dropped off the electoral registers at the time of the poll tax, and the recent switch to individual rather than household registration has lost more. The official Electoral Commission estimates that eight million people entitled to vote were missing from the December 2015 registers, i.e. from the figures the Boundary Commission uses in drawing boundaries to make electorates as equal as possible.

Areas with large numbers of poorer, younger, and more transient people thus lose out especially. The redrawing will boost the Tories at Labour's expense. The Electoral Reform Society has called for boundaries to be drawn to give roughly populations, rather than electorates.

The redrawing also means that around 200 Labour-held constituencies will altered or will vanish, thus compelling contests for parliamentary candidates despite the Labour right's protests.



Free speech is fundamental

Pete Radcliff, chair of Broxtowe CLP, is one of a number of prominent left activists to be expelled from the Labour Party.

[My expulsion] follows an anonymous complaint about me to the Party.

I don't know what has led anyone to complain to the Party about me. I cannot believe that it comes from anyone in my constituency party, where inclusiveness and comradely respect is genuinely shown by all party members.

I am told that I am expelled because I am an "active supporter of the AWL".

I believe that this is not an attack solely on me as an individual. It is intended to disorganise my constituency party and demoralise its members. It is also part of a national witch hunt conducted by figures still powerful in the Party who are attempting to drive away the hundreds of thousands of new members who have moved it to the left.

I have long advocated that our Party should be open to all who want to fight for a Labour victory.

Free speech and free debate are fundamental to socialism. They are essential to anything claiming to be a socialist political party.

- [Full statement here bit.ly/2cq2DJ](#)

Corbyn's environment policy: radical and visionary

By Todd Hamer

Jeremy Corbyn's Environment and Energy policy is a fleshed out version of the policy he announced last year.

It shows Corbyn at his most radical and visionary. Anyone who cares about the future of human civilisation should read it and rally to the Labour party to make it a reality.

Corbyn's broad vision is to solve the climate crisis whilst maintaining 21st century level of material wealth and abundance. His proposed National Investment bank will provide £500 billion of investment, creating 300,000 green jobs that will "accelerate the transition to a low-carbon economy".

The plans are ambitious and comprehensive. They include: education programmes to train up a new generation of workers, strategies to help decarbonise carbon-intensive industries, diversification of

local economies and job protection for those dependent on carbon-intensive industries, and extensive government backed R&D.

The plans include addressing waste through a massive tree-planting initiative, a home-building and insulating programme and the development of clean energy storage.

The policy is concerned with the human costs of environmental degradation. It proposes plans to tackle air pollution, reduce fuel poverty and allow greater access to nature. Significantly it pledges to "use a precautionary principle to protect the environment and people from harm — not a pay-to-pollute approach allowing the richest corporations and individuals to wreck our planet."

There are things that we might criticise.

The Corbyn plan makes no mention of nuclear energy — a little short-sighted. Scientists the world



Ideas to tackle air pollution are welcome

over are racing to make the next generation of nuclear power plants.

In the USA, China, India and Scandinavia there are projects that are tantalisingly close to producing safe, clean, non-weaponisable nuclear energy for the mass market. There is no reason why nuclear

should not be part of the picture.

More importantly, the vague pledge to "socialise" the big six energy companies from last year's leadership race has been replaced with a pledge to promote over 200 non-profit "local energy companies" and 1000 cooperatives via the National Investment Bank.

It is unclear by what mechanism power will pass from the big six to these micro-generators. It is conceivable that tough regulation and the commitment to ensure a just transition for energy workers, will facilitate the downfall of the big six.

But why not simply nationalise these firms and place them under worker and community control from the outset? Instead of a National Investment Bank with capital generated from government debt,

why not simply nationalise the privately owned banks?

Despite these shortfalls, the greater danger is avoided. Environmental politics, specifically the type promoted by the Green Party, is riddled with primitivist neo-Malthusian myths about greedy humanity and resource depletion.

Corbyn counters this with policy that asserts the compatibility of sustainability and abundance. With planned waste management and a zero-carbon energy supply, our species could manipulate the earth's resources any which way it likes, whilst avoiding catastrophic climate change.

Private ownership of the means of production, an economy run for profit, is the big obstacle to this rational use of resources. Corbyn's environmental plan point us in the right direction to challenge the command of capital over our environment and future.

Owen Smith, left anti-semitism, and the AWL

By Cathy Nugent

On BBC Question Time (Labour leadership debate, 8 September) Owen Smith, in the stream-of-consciousness style that has come to typify his approach to political debate, linked the Alliance for Workers' Liberty (as part of the "hard left" which was "flooding into the Party") to those on the left who "associate anti-Zionism, anti-imperialism", "anti-Israel" perspectives (sic). That is, he implied we were anti-semitic.

This incoherent tirade on "left anti-semitism" was a disgraceful intervention into an important issue that deserves serious, well-informed debate.

Smith's comments referred back to earlier remarks on the programme in which he accused Corbyn of not doing enough to make the Party a safe place for Jewish members. The hard left (which would, he implied, include the AWL) were causing this problem. There were other accusations woven into Smith's tirade, but let's focus on the accusa-

tion of anti-semitism.

You don't have to know very much about what the AWL stands for, agree with our two-states position on Israel-Palestine, or even be very left-wing to be aware that an accusation of "left anti-semitism" against us, however half-stated, is ludicrous. We have spent many years exposing, analysing and fighting this phenomena. It has not won us many friends on the organised hard left!

To give Smith the benefit of the doubt he appeared to be "winging it". He had probably only half-digested a briefing on the issue. Very possibly he was supposed to have a dig at Corbyn's association with the SWP in the Stop the War Campaign. But everything about his intervention was garbled. No doubt Smith thinks confident delivery makes up for ignorance. In any case neither he nor for that matter most of the British media care about accurately representing the views of the AWL. Over weeks of being the butt of "anti-Trotskyite" smear campaigns, no journalist has rung us up even just to check facts.

But Smith also seems to not want serious

discussion of "left anti-semitism" and that's a far more serious problem. In the interests of trying to promote a serious discussion, a necessary prerequisite of trying to do something about anti-semitism in all its forms, let's straighten out some facts.

Most left-wing anti-semites are not racist.

Most left-wing critics of Israel and Zionism are not anti-semites (and Israel frequently deserves criticism).

Left-wing anti-semitism is a phenomena that is rooted in policy. In the first place criticism of Israel is used as argument against the very existence of Israel.

Other arguments which flow from this policy display exceptional hostility to Israel — beyond justified opposition to Israel's brutal treatment of the Palestinians.

This brings with it exceptional hostility to most Jews everywhere, and particularly the Jewish citizens of Israel — who identify with Israel and defend its right to exist.

This generalised hostility can, in some cases, shade into or invoke classical anti-semitic tropes (e.g. claims that all Israeli Jews

are wealthy).

All of this can and must be challenged.

The AWL has been writing about and opposing this phenomena for some thirty years. That includes criticism of the Socialist Workers Party, analysing the Stalinist roots of "left-wing anti-semitism", and opposing the awful positions taken by the left as a result of these attitudes, such as the 1980s banning of Jewish Societies in student unions on the grounds that "Zionism is racism".

In contrast to Smith, we are also broadly supportive of the proposals made by Shami Chakrabarti about how to deal with both incidents of anti-semitism and the debate and around this issue. She argued for a spirit of free speech, education, and a measured range of sanctions. Instead of engaging in a critical dialogue with that report, Smith and people around him are trying to trash it. Their ongoing "scorched earth" battle against Corbyn means misrepresenting everything on this issue and not just the AWL's reputation.

For this reason Smith is not just another shallow careerist politician; he is also dangerous.

True, but not the whole

THE LEFT

Peter Tatchell tells a sad and essentially true story of the left's slowness on lesbian and gay rights (*Solidarity* 315).

The first article for our press for lesbian and gay rights was written in February 1974 and — even given the scantiness of our press before that, which meant that many other issues lacked coverage too — that was too late.

But neither in memory (I wrote the article) nor in re-reading was that article a matter of feeling that we "could not be seen as not supporting this issue rather than an active support for the principles".

As far as I can reconstruct it, the short-lived journal *Gay Marxist* prompted us into thinking that an important thread in our political tradition needed to be re-asserted forthrightly. The German Social Democratic Party, in its Marxist days, had been a pioneer for gay rights. The Bolsheviks had legislated for gay rights. Then the revolutionary Marxists had been pushed back to a breadline existence.

It was not just us. In Australia, the left-led Builders Labourers Federation struck to get Jeremy Fisher reinstated at Macquarie University in 1973 after he was expelled from a residential college



There is a Marxist tradition on LGBT rights

for declaring himself gay, and threatened a further strike to reinstate Penny Short's scholarship after it was cut because she wrote a poem about lesbian sex.

Martin Thomas, Islington

The PR man and his sexist gaffes

ELIZABETH BUTTERWORTH

Owen Smith's campaign Labour leadership tagline is "Labour's Future". Yet his attitudes to women seem to be stuck in the 1970s.

At a hustings in Westminster on 5 September, a woman audience member called his comments "deeply gendered, quite violent and aggressive towards women". Smith responded: "It has been the most mortifying experience for me in this contest to have been painted as sexist, because it's the last thing I am."

"In truth, some of the things you said reflected the way in which some phrases I used, either in a tweet or speech, have been decontextualised and repeated in order to portray me as being sexist."

I would suggest to Mr Competence that if he wants people to stop thinking he's sexist or bigoted, he needs to stop saying sexist and bigoted things, as, lacking the window into his soul that we clearly need, the only way we can judge his attitudes is through what he says and the way he acts.

When experienced MP and lesbian Angela Eagle was still running, he described himself in an interview as "normal — I've got a wife and three children". The implication of these remarks are that having a different-sex partner and kids is "normal" and other lifestyles are not.

He was challenged on this homophobia in a *Pink News* interview, where he was asked if Angela Eagle was normal and Jeremy Corbyn (who has been interrogated by the gutter press for having had more than one marriage) was normal, to which he responded in the affirmative. Smith's fist-bitingly awkward answer regarding Corbyn was that Jeremy "is normal... he's the leader of the Labour Party, he's not a very good leader of the Labour Party, but in other respects he is normal..."

In the first few days of his campaign, Smith said that, after the EU referendum, Labour should have been able to "smash [Theresa May] back on her heels", then defended these comments, dismissing the implied sexism as



"rhetoric", before his campaign team half-apologised on his behalf. Some defend this language as a sporting analogy, which I understand, but the context is that of Theresa May being only the second female Prime Minister we've ever had, and her dress sense being scrutinised in the tabloids, in particular for wearing kitten heels. As much as her politics are terrible, she is still subject to sexism.

Then there is the resurfacing of a "joke" Smith made on Twitter in April: "Perfect 'slice' served up by the ladies of the Ritz, Millport. They've got the perfect present for Nicola Sturgeon, too [accompanied by a picture of a jar of gobstoppers]." Putting aside calling women workers "ladies" he told a senior woman politician that she needs a gobstopper. He defended this as "political banter". Yes, "banter". And said there are "so many women running my campaign", as if this excuses his sexism!

Revoltingly, Smith said in an interview with the BBC, "I think Jeremy should take a little more responsibility for what's going on in the Labour party. After all, we didn't have this sort of abuse and intolerance, misogyny, antisemitism in the Labour party before Jeremy Corbyn became the leader." To claim that the Labour party was only beset by these problems nine months ago suggests that Smith is being disingenuous or pig-ignorant about the levels of bigotry that are around in society and on the left, and are therefore an

inevitable feature of a large political party.

In 2015, Owen Smith was caught on camera in a discussion with the leader of Plaid Cymru, L e a n n e Wood, saying "your gender helps" in getting appearances on Question

Time. Leanne Wood is the leader of the second most popular political party in Wales. Owen Smith is an MP very few people had heard of until recently. It's not to do with gender, unless you're a sexist.

In 2010, Smith wrote a blog post for Wales Home, analogising the Liberal Democrats' role in the coalition government to a domestic violence victim, writing, "The Lib Dem dowry of a maybe-referendum on AV will seem neither adequate reward nor sufficient defence when the Tories confess their taste for domestic violence on our schools, hospitals and welfare provision. Surely, the Liberals will file for divorce as soon as the bruises start to show through the make-up?"

In a more recent interview with Smith talked about his schooldays and meeting his wife, "1,200 boys, three girls and I pulled Liz. So I must have something going on. That must be leadership."

Truly hideous (and I haven't even mentioned his knob jokes). Women are not property to be won. Not everyone is straight. Relationships and sex aren't a competition. It's not just "lad bants" to talk about women in the way that Owen Smith does.

Smith is someone who can't be trusted to form a sentence without making a bigoted remark. If the leadership contest is meant to be about competence, then Smith deserves to lose very badly.

Don't bring back the 11-plus!

Any expansion of grammar schools in England will be a mechanism for intensifying social divisions.

The arrival of any new secondary school alters the local educational ecology. The arrival of an entirely selective school has a particularly damaging effect. It drastically recasts the intake of all other schools in an area, and at a stroke turns them, however they are named, into secondary moderns.

Maintaining a high level of attainment in public exams is made more difficult for these schools. They find it harder to secure their League Table position. OfSTED penalises them. These are the schools most children within a selective system will attend.

In this way the expansion of grammar schools will bring back the old "11-plus system" where the majority of children were consigned to a second-class education — a narrow curriculum and low expectations.

In addition grammar schools have always catered overwhelmingly for children from richer households. Detailed analysis by the School Dash website shows that the intake of certain types of school is significantly biased against the poorest children. Secondary schools labelled "outstanding" by OfSTED, single-sex schools, and certain types of faith school, generally take less than their share of poor children, but grammar schools show the most obvious bias in this regard.

BIAS

At present, 164 grammar schools exist in England. The Tory think-tank, Policy Exchange, pointed out in 2012 that only three of these contained a student-population of which more than 10% was eligible for free school meals (FSM), a standard proxy for impoverishment.

42 grammar schools registered between 3% and 10% FSM students. 98 schools (some 60% of the total number) contained fewer than 3% of such students. A further 21 had fewer than 1%.

The School Dash analysis also suggests that school selection and admission processes have an even more powerful effect on socioeconomic segregation than does housing costs. Grammar schools are past-masters at fixing their entry-criteria. They will continue to find ways of deciding who they select.



In the small number of local authority areas which retain a fully-selective system, such as Buckinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Kent and Medway, the contrast between the two broad types of school, grammar and secondary moderns, is stark. Buckinghamshire has 13 grammar schools, all labelled "outstanding" or "good" by OfSTED. It has 21 secondary moderns, of which over half are either in Special Measures or have been designated as "requires improvement". All 26 grammar schools in Kent are "outstanding", but only three of the county's secondary moderns are so labelled.

In an attempt to head off criticism that many children gain places in Buckinghamshire's grammar schools via intensive and expensive private tutoring, the county introduced so-called "tutor-proof" tests. These have made the situation worse. The number of grammar school places taken up by children from state primary schools has fallen, while those taken up by privately educated children has risen. Buckinghamshire's

BME children are disproportionately allocated to secondary moderns.

Hard right Tory activists from the Conservative Voice group, led by Liam Fox and David Davis, have spearheaded the drive for more grammars.

They commonly claim that the grammar/secondary-modern system enabled poor but "bright" children to leave behind their impoverished origins and rise in society. Figures from the 1950s and early 1960s, the heyday of that system, belie this claim.

The Gurney-Dixon report (1954), which looked at extending staying-on rates in grammar schools (and recommended opening more such schools), found that: "... from the children of parents in professional or managerial occupations at one extreme to the children of unskilled workers at the other there is a steady and marked decline in performance at the grammar school, in the length of school life, and in academic promise at the time of leaving."

FAILED

In other words, the very few children from the poorest backgrounds who made it into grammar school were much more likely to leave school early, and attain less highly, than their better-off peers.

The academic attainment record of very many of these children actually declined as they passed through the grammar school. The report found that two-thirds of the children of unskilled workers left grammar school with fewer than three O-levels. Given that grammar schools were established to ensure success at public exams, this is a disgraceful figure. (Education policy prevented most students in secondary modern schools from sitting public exams until the late 1960s.)

In the Sixth Form, only one-third of one per cent (0.3%) of grammar school pupils securing two A levels — then the standard outcome — were from the skilled working class. Grammar schools failed their working-class minority.

We reject the discourse of social mobility that defenders of grammar schools often employ.

It is not mobility within the system for individual members of the working class that

Defying failure

By Clive Larkin

I went to school in Kent, headquarters of the grammar school class-reproduction system.

In June 1973 I left school at 16 with no idea what I was going to do. I'd had some experience working at a bakery, as a window cleaner, delivering newspapers, cleaning the floors in Tesco and working with my dad on various building sites.

Plenty of low-skilled jobs were on offer for a working class kid predicted to fail the three "O" levels and five CSEs he sat that year. I was working at Harry Fenton's Menswear when the results came out in August 1973. I had passed those "O" levels.

Suddenly I had options. Unlike 90% plus of all the other secondary modern students I'd inadvertently crashed the 11-plus system which decided who should get academic qualifications and who shouldn't.

In 1965 the Labour Government issued Circular 10/65 which encouraged Local Authorities to convert all their schools to comprehensives. Kent was a bit slow but the Catholic Church school I went to was keen to convert. And so I was sitting some "O" levels as part of a pilot scheme. All our "academic" students had left at the end of year 8.

In 1967 the 11-plus exam was replaced by the 13 plus which didn't even involve an exam — we were just told whether we were staying at the Secondary Modern or going to one of the grammar schools.

I "failed" the 13-plus in 1970 and so was destined for educational failure.

In 1976 I started a History BA and in 1980 I started teaching.

We must fight with every means at our disposal to stop the reintroduction of the grammar school system. It had no redeeming features. It was, and is, odious!

most concerns us, but how to mobilise the class as a whole in pursuit of a more just and equal order.

Likewise, the determinist discourse of fixed innate "ability", the bedrock of selection, must be superseded. They are not always and forever, under any conditions, either "bright" or "less bright". The fixed "ability" discourse, manifested ultimately in a set of tests given at a certain age (classically in the 11+ exam) constructs and produces what it purports only to describe: the distinguishing of the academically "able" child from the rest.

This discourse seeks fraudulently to legitimise as a matter of social justice the requirement that "academic" children receive an education suited to their supposed needs, and that other types of education are offered to other types of children.

This false view of human educability, as having inherently greater or lesser limits depending only on the individual, remains widespread. It informs much of the thinking and decision-making about student-grouping and the nature of the curriculum in England's maintained education system, even in non-selective schools. It must continue to be challenged as educationally damaging and wasteful; as, to use Theresa May's words, "sacrificing children's potential because of dogma and ideology".

Against such calls, we must argue for an anti-determinist understanding of human educability, and for an education system based on the comprehensive ideal.

Patrick Yarker

No to school uniforms!

By Martin Thomas

Hartsdown Academy, in Kent, sent 50 students home on the first day of term for "incorrect" school uniform.

Nervous 11-year-olds on their first day in big school were turned away because of quibbles about their socks, or buckles on their shoes.

Yet the headteacher and the academy chain bosses are defiantly self-righteous. They want to stop the school being "scruffy".

There is no evidence that wearing costly, awkward, and weird clothes helps learning. School uniforms are unknown in Finland, which comes top in world assessments, and in France and Germany.

I teach maths in a school which requires teachers and sixth-formers to wear "business attire", and younger students to wear a strange uniform. When we have extra sessions in half-term, both students and teachers wear what we like — because we all

know that's better for learning.

Actual working mathematicians do not wear suits and ties. The only prominent counter-example is John von Neumann, who died in 1957, and was an oddity even in his day.

My daughters went to the only state high school in their Australian state which has no uniform. There was a general student revolt against uniform in the early 70s, with a victory that "stuck" only in that school. Conservatives deride it as "scruffy" and "the hippy school". Its academic results are better than those of the big, posh, elaborately-uniformed fee-paying school just across the road from it.

According to government figures, school uniforms cost an average of £230-odd, and it must be more for the more gung-ho uniform schools.

School-age children and young people have little enough liberty. Being able to dress as they like is one area where they can have liberty without risk of hurting themselves or anyone else.

Tories plan Great Wall of Calais

By Theodora Polenta

On 7 September, Britain's immigration minister, Robert Goodwill, announced that the government will build a four-metre-high wall for about one kilometre along the main port highway in Calais, France, to prevent refugees or immigrants boarding lorries to cross the Channel.

Construction will cost about £1.9 million, will start this month and is to be completed by the end of year. "Many continue to pass [the border]," said Goodwill, speaking to a parliamentary committee. "We have raised fences, now we will raise the wall." The wall will be made of a kind of "soft" cement, to make climbing difficult.

"This is the latest addition to kilometres of fences and surveillance systems already installed", said François Guennoc of the organization Auberge des Migrants, who works with Calais refugees. "The result is people who want to cross the Channel will move even further to succeed. Raise walls anywhere in the world, and people find ways to bypass them. It is a waste of money. It makes the journey more dangerous, increases the tariff charged by traffickers and ultimately puts a greater number of lives at risk.

"The wall is a symbolic gesture to be built with taxpayers' money. That money could surely be used to fund centres for the processing of asylum claims. But something unforgivable is happening when we cannot even let in the unaccompanied children from the camps."

"In 1964, the artist Joseph Beuys satirised the Berlin wall, suggesting it be raised by 5cm to have better proportions. He made his point and we know what happened to that wall. It is good to be reminded that there are those who build walls, but there are those who will build ladders over them. That is called hope" — Suzanne Moore, *Guardian*.

"In the end, walls fail. Even the Great Wall of China failed. The barbarians always get through..." — Andrew Brown, *Guardian*.

"When Donald Trump said he would build a wall between the United States and Mexico, most of us recoiled. How had politics in the 'land of the free' descended so low, so fast?",



asked Green MP Caroline Lucas.

"Trumpism has now landed in Britain," Lucas continued. "The immigration minister, Robert Goodwill, appeared to have been tuning into Trump's speeches for inspiration when he said yesterday, 'We are going to start building this big new wall very soon'."

In London on 5 September, Trade Unionists for Calais and Stand Up to Racism organised a protest outside the French Embassy to oppose calls in France for the demolition of the refugees camp in Calais.

Almost 10,000 refugees and migrants live in dire conditions in "the Jungle" on the site of an old landfill. They are trapped there by Britain's border closure and French state repression. The jungle's population has rocketed by almost a third in little over a month. But "donor fatigue" means that the charities that provide for them are running out of food. Disgracefully the same states that lock them out refuse to provide for them.

The French government has pledged to create more accommodation for asylum seekers in France. But this is not enough to meet the waiting list of people who are homeless while their asylum claims are processed. It won't offer an alternative to people in the "Jungle".

Even the supposedly most deserving refugees are not being taken in. An amendment to the Tories' Immigration Act called for more child refugees to be accepted into Britain, yet hundreds remain in Calais. No effort has been made to identify and bring these children over. That applies even to children; single women at risk of violence, exploitation and trafficking; and trauma victims, who have good claims under existing law to be reunited in the UK with their families.

Information services and legal advice are almost non-existent in the Grande-Synthe camp in Dunkirk and inadequate in Calais,

so people have no access to the processes for being reunited with relatives and are unaware of their rights and options. Others living in the camps are unable to access legal routes to family reunion because they cannot meet excessive evidential requirements — for example for documentation they do not have because of the circumstances in which they have been forced to flee conflict and persecution — insisted upon by the UK Home Office or assumed to be required by their French counterparts.

In addition, many people with relatives in the UK are prevented from joining them here under existing rules. Many parents are not permitted to join their refugee children in the UK and adult siblings are kept apart.

Many, therefore, find themselves with no choice but to pay smugglers and risk their lives trying to cross the Channel by jumping in the back of a lorry, walking through the Eurotunnel, or even setting off from the coast in small boats.

Hotspots in Greece

In late July, the 1,300 inmates of the refugee camp of Viale, on the Greek island of Chios, hunger-struck against the squalid living conditions: unacceptable food, heavy-handed policing, and prolonged detention.

Despite their mobilization, things got worse, and one day they were not even given food. The next day it was only bread and water. On August 10 the refugees wrote: "No food, no water".

Now the solidarity movement has no access in Viale, and the local media do not cover it.

Following on the EU's March 2016 agreement with Turkey, the refugee "hot spots" on the Aegean islands are places where basic

rights such as access to asylum or refugee status, or family reunification in EU countries where their relatives already live, are unavailable. Refugee children get only an informal education in the miserable camps where they live, with 800 unqualified teachers recruited through NGOs.

Greece's Syriza "government of the left" is sending the message that passage to Greece means indefinite entrapment in such camps.

Two consecutive autopsies on refugee deaths reported an accumulation of stagnant water and sewage in the camps.

In mid-August the refugees in Ritsona, in an open letter, described how they lived in tents in a forest, in suffocatingly high temperatures, exposed to mosquitoes, wasps,

scorpions and snakes. There have been 20 reported cases of hepatitis B. There is a lack of hot water, insufficient toilets, waste water overflowing, inadequate medical support.

Yet in the early hours of 27 July 27, riot police, under the pretext of respecting church and municipal property, raided three squats in Thessaloniki where anarchist groups had set up shelters for refugee families. Seventy-four people were taken into custody. The majority of the activists arrested were part of the "No Borders" group, which had held a camp in Thessaloniki between 14 and 24 July attended by 1,500 activists from all over Europe.

Ultra-right-wing mobs followed up by attack other refugee-solidarity centres, such as

Notara Street.

Solidarity is the only weapon that can beat their Fortress Europe. The task of the Left in Greece and Europe is to force the creation of structures to welcome refugees — infrastructure in the cities integrated with the communities and neighbourhoods, instead of remote detention camps; access to asylum requests; resettlement and family reunification for every refugee; access for refugee children to primary and secondary education to integration and reception classes; medical care; access to social benefits.

Anti-migrant protests and the left

On 5 September, a group of lorry and tractor drivers blocked the motorway in Calais demanding the demolition of the so-called “jungle” refugee camp outside the French town.

Around 400 people joined a “human chain” as lorries and tractors blocked major roads and disrupted traffic by driving slowly.

Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve met with local officials, police and businesspeople in Calais ahead of the protests against the “Jungle” refugee camp. Cazeneuve says he will “progressively dismantle” the “Jungle”, but the protesters wanted a definite date set. They claimed that refugees had become an economic drain on Calais and a stain on the city’s image.

The Calais Federation of Enterprises and Businesses, far-right police unions, the national trucking association, and farmers’ groups came together in a self-proclaimed “apolitical citizens’ movement” to demand the dismantling of the “Jungle” and an end to “pressure from migrant flows”. Shamefully, the Calais dockers’ branch of the CGT

union federation joined the demonstration, cynically claiming it was defending jobs.

The CGT’s participation reflects a long-standing nationalist orientation, inherited from the Stalinist French Communist Party (PCF).

In 2009, undocumented workers occupied a trade union hall in Paris to demand that the CGT organize a struggle to regularize their status and get them papers. They were violently expelled by riot police units, whom the CGT had called to intervene.

In December 1980, the PCF mayor in the Paris suburb of Vitry-sur-Seine supported PCF activists deploying a bulldozer to make a newly-provisioned hostel for migrant workers in the suburb unusable. The hostel was to have housed 300 Malians transferred from a right-controlled suburb, and the PCF explained that it was protesting against PCF-controlled areas having to take “too many” migrants relative to right-controlled areas.

The legacy of “national roads to socialism” with the pretext of defending the terms and conditions of the settled working class was also seen in the “Lexit” (“left exit from the



EU”) campaign. The Socialist Party’s website says:

“The socialist and trade union movement from its earliest days has never supported the ‘free movement of goods, services and capital’ – or labour – as a point of principle but instead has always striven for the greatest possible degree of workers’ control, the highest form of which, of course, would be

a democratic socialist society with a planned economy.

“It is why, for example, the unions have historically fought for the closed shop, whereby only union members can be employed in a particular workplace, a very concrete form of ‘border control’ not supported by the capitalists”.



Walls and spaces

William Shakespeare wrote parts of an unfinished play, *The Book of Thomas More*, to depict More, the great Utopian socialist, defending the Huguenot refugees seeking to flee to England from France. It is the only surviving text in Shakespeare’s handwriting.

*Imagine that you see the wretched strangers,
Their babies at their backs and their poor luggage,
Plodding to the ports and coasts for transportation,
And that you sit as kings in your desires...*

*... This is the strangers’ case,
And this your mountainish inhumanity*

Today — Donald Trump’s wall of Mexico and the British-French Great Wall of Calais. Fences in Evros, on the Greek-Turkish land border. Fences in Hungary. Fences in Bulgaria. Fences in Slovenia. Fences in Austria...

Refugees and migrants stacked between borders, outside the realm of geographical boundaries and temporality, in uncharted territories. A shadow of the People’s Europe that celebrated the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Europe that was celebrating the demolition of fences and walls that divided people.

The writer Frances Stonor Saunders declares:

The migrant identity becomes a burden to be unloaded. Migrants often make the journey without identity documents... one reason... the attempt to obtain them in their country of origin can be very dangerous. Others lose them at the outset when they’re robbed by police or border guards, or by people-traffickers en route.

Many destroy them deliberately because they fear, not without reason, that our system of verification will be a mechanism for sending them back... And they don’t only burn their documents: many burn their fingertips on hobs or with lighters or acid, or mutilate them with razors, to avoid biometric capture and the prospect of expulsion. These are the weapons of the weak (London Review of Books, 3 March 2016).

Only when the crowded boats beginning to sink, in the night, in the Mediterranean or the Aegean, do the refugees cry out their names, so that those who survive will tell their loved ones. The fate of today’s refugee is to be in places that are not places.

Polarisation in Harlow

By Steve Drewett

“Brexit” is “Brexit” and “violent assault” is “violent assault”.

Much as some people would deny that there is a connection between Brexit and the violence that occurred in Harlow over the August bank holiday, leaving one Polish man dead and another injured, there is undoubtedly one. Both statements attempt to describe something and yet still leave one in the dark.

I live in Harlow and have done so since 1959, I love this town. Its problems, such as they are, are no more (and probably less) than anywhere else in Britain.

One thing it is not, is intolerant. Quite the opposite. A lot of people live here whose ethnic origins lie outside of the British Isles, including a very large Polish community, and have for the most part been accepted. There will always be those that resent foreign workers, but they are in the minority.

When we heard about the horrendous attack on these two Polish men, and then, a week later another attack, again on two Polish males, the shock divided the Harlow community on the cause of the violence.

One camp (Remain voters?) blamed the nature of the Brexit campaign, as it had aped the type of propaganda that Goebbels used against the Jews in Nazi Germany (the “breaking point” poster) and so had set the tone for viewing EU nationals as targets. After the murder of MP Jo Cox during the EU campaign, many felt this would not be the end of incidents in which some people may think that they had been given the nod from their political masters to take events into their own hands.

The other camp (Brexit voters?) thought that this was just a case of feral teenagers



A community vigil in Harlow

whose anti-social behaviour had gone one step too far. There had in fact been an ongoing problem with them before this incident. The other attack was reasoned to be just one of the usual nightclub brawls that all large towns experience from time to time.

However, we live in a “jenga” society in which the building blocks of our communities, like youth and mental health services, decent employment and benefits etc. have all but been removed. Both parents and young people are left to cope as they can. Some do not. And when it all comes crashing down, everyone is a loser.

“Feral teenagers” maybe, but that seems to ignore the surviving victim’s belief that they were attacked because they were heard to be speaking Polish and the fact that there has been a growing number of racist comments, threats and physical violence to the Polish community since the EU Referendum.

Both incidents are being investigated with hate crime as a possible motivation, but as we will not know for definite until they are complete, it leaves the motive wide open to speculation.

Whatever the truth, this polarisation, similar to the one the country experienced with Leave and Remain, has us all in the dark about how things will turn out.

Ports and workers' power

By Martin Thomas*

“The RWG [container] terminal [in Rotterdam, 2.35m teu capacity], with its fully automated cranes, is operated by a team of no more than 10 to 15 people on a day-to-day basis. Most of its 180 employees aren't longshoremen, but IT specialists” (Journal of Commerce, 4 February 2016).

The managing director says: “We are in fact, an IT company that handles containers”.

Compare: in 1900 the Port of London was the busiest port in the world. It had 50,000 workers shifting cargo mostly by hand, as they had done for thousands of years. It handled 7 million tons of cargo.

“Teu” means “twenty-foot equivalent unit” (most containers are 20 feet or 40 feet), and up to 20 tons. The RWG terminal, one of several in Rotterdam, with its 180 workers, can handle probably 20 or so million tons a year, three times as much weight, and vastly more value, than the 50,000 London dockers of 1900.

In Rotterdam, too, one operator in front of a computer screen can direct 10 fully-automated machines that store and tranship incoming iron ore and coal. Another terminal for bulk [non-containerised] cargoes, in Shanghai, also has all its operations workers in control rooms, not on the quays.

Container terminals, however highly automated, always require manual labour to “lash” (lock down) the containers on the ships, or unlash them. Bulk terminals are almost always highly mechanised.

TECHNOLOGY

Port work went through a technological revolution in the 1960s and 70s, with “containerisation”.

Now it is going through another technological revolution, with automation.

“Containerisation” meant packing non-bulk cargoes in standard metal boxes. It came together with:

- bigger cranes
- motor vehicles to move containers round quays
- bigger trucks, bigger highways
- bigger and “cellular” ships, built so that containers can be lifted into and out of standard spaces
- ports moving out of big cities and to deeper-water quays with direct access to inter-city highways and rail lines.

It eliminated almost all direct manual cargo-handling in ports, and also most of the clerical and warehousing work of keeping track of cargoes.

The story of containerisation and automation, however, is not just one of machines replacing workers. And port automations today are multi-faceted and often slow and piecemeal. These facts have implications for the response that workers and trade unions should make.

Because containerisation went together with an expansion in the amount of stuff shipped, it came with an expansion, not a shrinking, of the overall workforce in the “logistics” industry.

180,000 workers are employed in the Port of Rotterdam, by 1,200 firms. The Port expects to want 10,000 more workers by 2030.

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates employment in logistics will increase by 22% between 2012 and 2022. The industry already employs about six million people; a trade

group says it will be looking to fill 270,000 extra jobs each year.

Port automations are patchy. Most of the clerical work has been automated almost everywhere. But “only around 2.5 percent of global container volume is currently handled by fully automated terminals and their market share will rise to between 4 percent and 5 percent when ongoing projects are completed”, according to a crane-making company boss (*Journal of Commerce*, 15 June 2016).

In the USA “no terminal has automated both functions that are ripe for automation: horizontal ground transport from the foot of the ship-to-shore crane to the container stacks, and the movement of containers within the stacks” (*JoC*, 2 October 2014). The TraPac terminal at the Port of Los Angeles is the leader in automation. It says it will be fully converted to Automatic Stacking Cranes by 2018.

“Although it eliminates some jobs, automation fosters creation of new jobs that call for a higher level of skills and higher pay. TraPac, for example, has hired 40 additional mechanics to maintain and repair the costly, sophisticated machines” (*JoC*, 2 October 2014).

“Automation” may mean remote control (of a quay crane, for example) from a driver in an office, or full automation, where for example the work and the paths of automatic straddle carriers are calculated by computer with no human operator.

Lashing and unlash, the main remaining heavy manual job on wharves, has no near-term prospect of being automated: a priority for unions is to ensure that the water-side workforce does not become divided into a one group operating part-automated equipment, and another, maybe contracted-out, doing the lashing.

Despite the ballyhoo about Rotterdam, right now port operators are hesitant about the heavy investments needed to automate more fully. Highly-automated terminals are generally new-built ones. On the whole (there are some exceptions), it is difficult and expensive to convert an existing terminal to more automatic operation.

“Antwerp doesn't have highly automated terminals, but it is achieving higher productivity than its rivals in Rotterdam” (*JoC*, 4 February 2016). “Shanghai, the world's biggest container port, runs primarily a manual operation” (*JoC*, 2 October 2014).

Automation or high semi-automation is found mostly in northern Europe, east Asia, and Australia, less in the USA. Even in northern Europe, a 2013 study found most container terminals using manually-driven straddle carriers, rail-mounted gantry cranes, rubber-tyred gantry cranes, or tractors, rather than anything more fully-automated, and with no less productivity than the more-automated terminals.

“Is this a good time to automate? Probably not. We've got an oversupply of terminal capacity”, OECD official Olaf Merk told a port bosses' conference (*JoC*, 15 June 2016).

World trade grew faster than world output from after World War 2 through to 2008, and especially fast after the spread of containerisation in the 1970s. But, since a recovery in 2010 from the extreme slump level of 2009, it has grown much more slowly. Hong Kong's container volume fell 9.5% in 2015, and Singapore's 8.7%. Shanghai's grew slightly, but a trade journal estimates “China port volume set for slowdown after 2015 growth” (*JoC* 22



Modern container port: no warehouses, few workers on the quay

January 2016).

At the same time, large investment projects planned before 2008 are coming on stream. “The total current container fleet contains almost 5,000 ships with a total capacity of almost 16 million TEUs. Almost 3 million TEUs of this capacity is from the ‘super-Post Panamax’ ships (i.e. those with more than 8,000 TEU capacity), with another 2.5 million TEUs on order. There is no apparent place to profitably assign these big ships” (World Economic Forum).

AUTOMATION

Moreover, most of the modifications needed for mega-ships are not to do with automation: deeper channels, longer wharves, bigger storage areas, bigger cranes. And the infrastructure behind the terminal is as important as the terminal itself. It is no use having a highly automated terminal if the containers come in to it, and go out of it, on trucks trying to navigate overcrowded roads.

The new DP World terminal at London Gateway has Automatic Stacking Cranes, but its quay cranes are still manually operated, and of its straddle carriers it reports only that they “are planned to move from manual to automated operation in the future”. It touts for business on the strength of its deep water and the 300-hectare logistics park being built behind it with “road connections to the North, South, East and West via an eight-lane highway; and the UK's largest port rail terminal”.

The new JadeWeserPort in Wilhelmshaven, Germany, just west of Bremerhaven, likewise boasts about its 160-hectare logistics park, which it claims to be “one of the most efficient transport hubs in Northern Europe”. Its straddle carriers are not automated. Its claim is that its deep water and long wharves will make it the only port in Germany able to deal with mega-ships.

Both those new terminals are still running way below capacity. The whole industry is in slump. According to Nils Andersen, boss of the giant shipping and ports company Maersk, “the industry is losing money, probably pretty big sums”, though Maersk made US \$3.1 billion profit in 2015 and expects

some, though smaller, profits in 2016. CMA CGM also made profits in 2015, of US \$567 million. Cosco made profits of US \$43.7 million, small in relation to its revenues of US \$9 billion. DP World made profits of US \$883 million in 2015, and Hutchison Port Holdings US \$370 million. Hanjin has recently gone bust.

Australia has the world's most automated port industry. The Patrick's terminal in Brisbane, with its auto-strads, is as automated in its crane-stack-truck operations as any terminal in the world. When the new ICTSI terminal in Melbourne starts up in January 2017, it will be one of the first in the world to have automation or remote control in all dimensions.

Both the main container terminal operators, Patrick's and DP World, have pioneered automations in the smaller port of Brisbane, accepting interim losses there, and automating in larger terminals when they have refined the technology in a smaller terminal.

The Patrick's auto-strad option is a version of automation potentially adaptable to existing terminals. It does not require digging up the quay pavement to install magnets or rails, which is very expensive and stops the terminal operating in the meantime. The auto-strads are not specially more expensive than similar straddle-carriers with drivers' cabins.

A limitation for now is that the IT to run the auto-strad system, developed by Patrick's with the University of Sydney, is proprietary. The intellectual property in the IT has now been licensed by Patrick to a Finnish company, Kalmar Global, and within a few years will be available to other operators.

Sluggish trade figures and the overhang of investments planned before 2008 will apply pressure, and are likely to incite attacks by bosses on port workers' conditions in ports with all degrees of automation.

However, in many ways port workers' strategic position in economic life is stronger in today's era of high mechanisation and “just in time” than in the days of mass manual labour in ports. So long as port workers are well-organised, they will also be well-placed to resist those attacks.

The ports before containerisation should not be romanticised. Before the 1960s “only

in Rotterdam and Hamburg, where semi-casual workers were guaranteed income equal to five shifts per week in 1948, could most dockers look forward to earning steady incomes". British dock workers were guaranteed a fallback wage under the National Dock Labour Scheme, but a very small one, a bit over £3 per week when the average wage was almost £20 per week. Into the 1970s, Boston dock workers worked an average of one and a half days a week; New Orleans workers, two days a week.

In 1900, dockers were killed by cargo-handling injuries in London at the rate of one a week. No-one went more than a couple of years without substantial injury. Dockers suffered illnesses from unsafe cargoes: sulphur, phosphorus, asbestos...

In the broad historical overview, the mechanisation of ports has made it easier, not harder, for port workers to get stable jobs rather than the casual work which was the norm in ports for centuries. The European Transport Workers' Federation reports that "since the 1990s, when many EU countries have started liberalising and/or privatising their ports... attempts to dismantle port labour schemes (often referred to as 'labour pools')... casualisation has come back"; but at the Patrick's terminal in Brisbane, for example, all workers are permanent salaried employees.

PROGRESS

No union is under a moral obligation to facilitate capitalist automations in the name of general progress. Yet the experience with all technological revolutions is that workers and unions do better to fight for influence and control over the terms of their introduction than simply to oppose or try to delay them.

As Marx wrote: "It took both time and experience before the workpeople learnt to distinguish between machinery and its employment by capital, and to direct their attacks, not against the material instruments of production, but against the mode in which they are used".

From the replacement of hand-loom weaving by power looms through to today, technological change can be modified, but it cannot be halted. From a long-term working-class point of view, we do not want to halt it: the possibilities of producing plenty with short working weeks which capitalist technology brings are a necessary foundation for building a socialist society where the technology has been brought under workers' control and everyone can live well without anyone being crushed by toil.

Automations should not be regarded as a challenge which union organisation is unable to meet. If a crane driver is in an office with other workers, that is not obviously worse for building solidarity than if he or she is in a little cabin far above other workers. If the work of moving goods is redistributed, and has a higher proportion of IT and maintenance labour, it can still be organised.

Unions like the ILWU on the West Coast of the USA, and the WWF in Australia, which saw containerisation coming and quickly set about negotiating terms, suffered setbacks, but they did better than others. In 1969, Sydney was the fourth biggest container port in the world, and Melbourne the eighth biggest. In Britain, the TGWU had essentially no strategy. Its leaders achieved only better voluntary redundancy money; rank and file resistance in some ports delayed containerisation, but mostly resulted only in the work moving to new developments in Felixstowe and Southampton.

In January 2016 dock workers struck in three terminals at Rotterdam, over a threat to jobs from new fully-automated terminals opening in the next few years. They estimated 800 out of 3700 jobs in the terminals were at risk. The dispute ended in July 2016

with a deal which provides job security until 2020 for existing workers, including workers employed by a labour-pool firm for the terminals which is folding, and allows workers over 60 to work 60% hours for 90% pay, but effectively concedes that union strength will gradually decline.

The latest five-year deal between the union (the ILWU) and the port bosses on the US West Coast repeats the shortcomings of the first Mechanisation and Modernisation Agreement in 1960. Even a conservative historian writes: "[ILWU leader] Bridges drastically underestimated the speed with which containers would alter work on the waterfront, and demanded far too little for his members as a result". In 1960 the MMA gained employment security for "core" workers who were registered union members ("A" men), but at the expense of job control and of the wiping-out of the jobs of the "B" men and the casuals. The latest deal is on similar lines: pay and benefits increases for the existing workforce in exchange for a dwindling degree of control over the labour process and a reduced workforce in the future.

It is wise to try to negotiate conditions in advance over automations, rather than waiting for them to come and then going into defensive, reactive, panic mode.

Key aims can include: job security, with provision for retraining and redeployment, of the existing workforce; decasualisation; consultation with the union over every technological innovation; union agreements covering manual work on the wharves (lashing and unlashings), and also other port and hinterland work including IT, security, maintenance, commissioning of equipment, and logistics-hub work; shorter work weeks, better breaks, and the right for workers to have breaks at common times.

Fighting over work breaks is important. The major plus of automation for the bosses is not that it makes operations faster, or even that it reduces worker counts, but that it allows consistent, continuous, operation, without breaks for accidents, crane-driver change-overs, etc. At the DP World terminal



Dock workers have more strategic power than ever. A strike in Port Piraeus, Athens.

in Brisbane, workers now never have a break all together, and that has made union organisation more difficult. At the more automated Patrick's terminal next door, the union has saved the right to a common break.

STRATEGIC

The change in technology since the 1960s and 70s has made some of the new logistics hubs into economic nodes scarcely less strategic than the ports.

These are not a few warehouses sited wherever industrial land is cheap, and easily substitutable by similar warehouses on another piece of cheap land: they are big industrial complexes, with big fixed investments. The developers of London Gateway claim that when the terminal and the logistics hub are in full swing, they will employ 36,000 workers.

The best way for port workers to defend their conditions is to make their existing

strength a base for efforts to spread union organisation, and win comprehensive agreements, among all workers in the ports (IT staff, security guards, etc. included) and the thousands of other workers who are now in closely-linked jobs around ports. Those agreements should also allow for re-training of workers. That activity will require coordination between different unions; dwindling rates of unionisation across industry should give unions the necessary sense of urgency about overcoming secondary conflicts.

And in that way port workers can not only win a better working life for themselves, but use their great strategic strength to help win a better society and a better life for all workers.

* This is a revised and abridged version of an article previously published by the Maritime Union of Australia Queensland Branch News and by the International Dockworkers' Council.

Books by Workers' Liberty



Can socialism make sense?

A new book from Workers' Liberty which makes the case for socialism. In a time when socialism is the most searched word on the Merriam-Webster dictionary website, more and more people call

themselves socialists, and a self-confessed socialist is leader of the Labour Party, this book explores what socialism means, whether it can rise again, how, and why.

It answers questions such as: What about Stalin? Are revolutions democratic? How can we have a planned economy? and is socialism still relevant?

£12 (£14.80 including postage)

www.workersliberty.org/socialism

Why socialist feminism?

Workers' Liberty makes class struggle and radical social change central to our feminism. We are socialist feminists. This pamphlet explores what "socialist feminism" might mean in the context of the latest "wave", and global conditions.

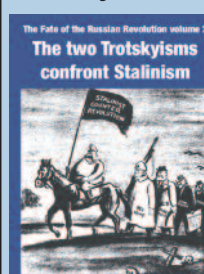
£6.20 (inc postage) from www.workersliberty.org/why-soc-fem



The two Trotskyisms confront Stalinism

For the revolutionary socialists, the Trotskyists, it has been a very long march through the 20th century and beyond, and over sometimes

uncharted, unexpected, terrain. Central to it has been the fight against Stalinism, to understand it, to wipe the labour movement clean of it. This book surveys and documents for the first time the formative debates in the 1940s between the two main strands into which Trotskyism divided.



£23 (inc postage) from bit.ly/twotrotskyisms

Where we stand

Today one class, the working class, lives by selling its labour power to another, the capitalist class, which owns the means of production.

The capitalists' control over the economy and their relentless drive to increase their wealth causes poverty, unemployment, the blighting of lives by overwork, imperialism, the destruction of the environment and much else.

Against the accumulated wealth and power of the capitalists, the working class must unite to struggle against capitalist power in the workplace and in wider society.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty wants socialist revolution: collective ownership of industry and services, workers' control, and a democracy much fuller than the present system, with elected representatives recallable at any time and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

We fight for trade unions and the Labour Party to break with "social partnership" with the bosses and to militantly assert working-class interests.

In workplaces, trade unions, and Labour organisations; among students; in local campaigns; on the left and in wider political alliances we stand for:

- Independent working-class representation in politics.
- A workers' government, based on and accountable to the labour movement.
- A workers' charter of trade union rights — to organise, to strike, to picket effectively, and to take solidarity action.
- Taxation of the rich to fund decent public services, homes, education and jobs for all.
- A workers' movement that fights all forms of oppression. Full equality for women, and social provision to free women from domestic labour. For reproductive justice: free abortion on demand; the right to choose when and whether to have children. Full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Black and white workers' unity against racism.
- Open borders.
- Global solidarity against global capital — workers everywhere have more in common with each other than with their capitalist or Stalinist rulers.
- Democracy at every level of society, from the smallest workplace or community to global social organisation.
- Equal rights for all nations, against imperialists and predators big and small.
- Maximum left unity in action, and openness in debate.

If you agree with us, please take some copies of *Solidarity* to sell — and join us!



More online at www.workersliberty.org Workers' Liberty @workersliberty

Don't leave the party

LABOUR

Pamela Fitzpatrick, a Labour councillor in Harrow, north London, was suspended from the Labour Party on 28 August with no reason provided. She has now been reinstated, but again with no reasons given, and no ballot to vote in the leadership election. She spoke at a Stop the Purge meeting in London on 7 September. This is an excerpt from her speech.

I was actually surprised how upset I was over it, and I didn't think I would be.

I've moaned about the Labour Party for so many years, but I have given a huge amount of my time to canvassing, getting people involved, encouraging others to get involved, whoever the leader was. I've argued internally, my politics are on the left, but I have accepted the collective decision because my background is in trade unionism as well. I have been a shop steward wherever I have worked.

I have been quite a vocal supporter of Corbyn and I spoke with him at a rally in Ealing last year. During the last leadership election I was one of the councillors that signed the pro-Corbyn letter.

I rang the number on the letter and waited ages to speak to someone. I explained I had been suspended and asked why. They confirmed I had been suspended. I said I know that, but can you give me the reasons! They put me through to the Compliance Unit. Even the name itself is just horrific. They wouldn't give me the reasons over the phone.

My case seemed to be about is a local person reporting my conduct



Pamela (far left) campaigning for Jeremy Corbyn with Harrow Momentum activists

at a meeting. I discovered subsequently that this person had made a complaint to the Chief Whip about me. That had been investigated and it was found there was no evidence, quite the opposite. The evidence suggested that the complaint was fabricated.

RESPONSE

I want people to know what had happened to me. The response I've had has been amazing.

In my day job I work in a law centre, with social security law, which is a very Kafkaesque area. However, even there, there are rules. There are procedures that have to be abided by.

This party, the Labour Party, is responsible for the Human Rights Act. The HRA brought into UK legislation the right to a fair hearing, and there are rules as to what constitutes a fair hearing. In employment law suspensions are last resort. They shouldn't be the first. But we're being suspended, thousands of us.

Most commonly people's sus-

pensions or expulsions are for minor things. If someone has been abusive or threatening, they should be suspended. I agree with that. But not because somebody uses a swearword or calls somebody a traitor.

I don't think this is just the Compliance Unit making work for themselves. It is an organised campaign to get the margins between Corbyn and Smith closer. I believe the Smith campaign have got people making complaints.

I am urging people not to leave the party even if Owen Smith wins, because it's more than Corbyn. We must democratise the party. We must bring back some alternative to these Tory policies, whether they are in the guise of Labour or of the Conservative Party.

If Owen Smith wins, we deal with why that has happened, whether that is through legal action, or through us collectively in our CLPs getting together and saying we have had enough and we are not putting up with this any more.

Events

Thursday 15 September

Organising the unorganised: Workers' Liberty's London forum 7pm, Indian YMCA, 41 Fitzroy Square, London W1T 6AQ bit.ly/2cwYfq4

Sunday 17 September

Refugees welcome here national demonstration 12.30pm, Park Lane, London bit.ly/2c5KdLk

Tuesday 20 September

Haringey radical readers discuss 'Half of a yellow sun' 7pm, Big Green Bookshop, Brampton Park Rd, London N22 6BG bit.ly/2c0TAMW

Tuesday 20 September

Keep Corbyn rally, Doncaster 7.30pm, Cast theatre, Waterdale, Doncaster, DN1 3BU bit.ly/2ct0CZE

24-28 September

Labour Party conference and the World Transformed festival Liverpool www.theworldtransformed.org

Sunday 2 October

National demonstration at Tory Party conference Assemble 11.30am, Victoria Square, Birmingham bit.ly/2c0Ro8m

Got an event you want listing?
solidarity@workersliberty.org

We have been denied natural justice

Philip Lewis is Health and Safety Officer for Camden Unison, and a Labour Party member in Hornsey and Wood Green. He spoke to *Solidarity* about his suspension.

Jeremy Corbyn led the opposition with Bernie Grant against the National Front in Haringey in 1977 and that is why I support him.

He made sure Haringey was united, and that is what he is preaching today.

He is a decent man being treated as some sort of horror. All he is asking for is decent opportunities for the poor and disabled. He wants to look after the whole community. Our young people are being bat-

tered by fees in education and high rents.

But the Labour Party now thinks I am not worthy of a vote.

They have said there are allegations about a tweet which I now know was a retweet! They couldn't even tell me what tweet it was when they suspended me and I'd have to go through 100,000 tweets to find them. I now know it is about three retweets that challenge the Blairites over the coup. Even then, it remains an allegation.

We need a campaign about all of us that have been suspended. We need to stop it from happening, I was suspended on the same day as Ronnie Draper. We have been denied our natural justice and human rights. This is nothing short of a witch hunt against those that don't support the status quo.



Phil Lewis speaking at a Unison event

I had planned to stand for the Local Campaign Forum but I now can't do that. My activities have been severely curtailed

It beggars belief that this is happening.

HE: reject the pay offer!

By a Unison member

Unison is organising a strike ballot among its members in the Higher Education (HE) sector to oppose this year's pay offer.

The offer of just 1.1% for the majority of staff, with some additional payments at the lower end of the scale, is not adequate to meet rises in the cost of living and compensate for rises in taxation.

The union is recommending rejection of the offer and demanding a 5% rise, and the independent living wage for those on the lowest pay. Although there is a financial squeeze on the HE sector, those at the top are trying to make those at the bottom suffer all of the pain. In 2014/15 university vice-chancel-

lors, the top job, had an average pay rise of 6.1%. Their average pay was £275,000.

The lecturers' union UCU is operating Action Short of Strike (ASOS) in their pay dispute; they struck for three days in the last academic year. Unite is currently bal-

loting for strike action over pay; GMB is not organising a ballot.

Unison's strike ballot closes on 19 September. If the Unison and Unite ballots reject the offer, strikes could happen in the first two months of the new academic year.

Uni of Nottingham pay dispute

By a Unison member

Unison members at the University of Nottingham have rejected a local pay offer of 1.1%.

They are demanding 5% and £500, plus the living wage for those at the bottom of the pay scale. In an indicative ballot, 75% voted to reject.

The Unison branch has also opened negotiations with a view to returning to the national pay bargaining mechanism.



Picturehouse protest

On Friday 12 September, activists staged an action at the Hackney Picturehouse in solidarity with the Ritzy Picturehouse workers, who in dispute for the living wage, maternity pay and sick pay.

They interrupted a showing of the newly-remastered David Bowie film, *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, as it was being introduced by director

Danny Boyle. They made a speech to explain the dispute, stood up with placards and were received with much applause from the packed room.

Danny Boyle showed his support for the campaign by posing for pictures.

• Follow the Ritzy dispute: facebook.com/RitzyLivingWage

Cleaners fight union-busting

By Simon Nelson

Cleaners at Kinsley Academy school in West Yorkshire are on indefinite strike against their outsourced employer, C&D Cleaning.

They are fighting against pay cuts of 65p an hour, and removal of their sick pay entitlement.

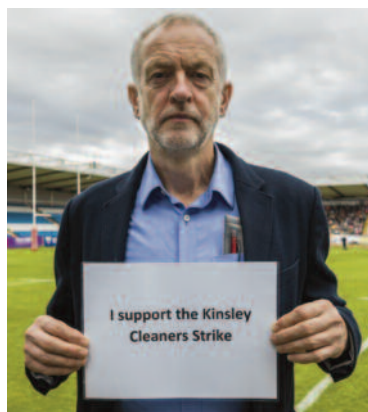
Following Unison challenging the company to recognise the Tupe legislation, which protected the workers terms and conditions when they were transferred from working for Wakefield Council, C&D's HR Director went on the offensive against the union and the workers; in their response to union concerns they said;

"We do not require your input, opinion or indeed assistance in any

shape or form...I do not expect to hear from you again...We do not recognise you or your organisation and subsequently we will not be entering into any form of dialogue with you in relation to our employees...

"I understand from the above and the impact for you as an organisation when members realise that we are no longer in the 1980s and this questions the actual value of union membership when you have no say, no power or influence over their employer....

"I also understand that by your very nature you make your living justify your means out of recalcitrant behaviour and churlish threats. I would therefore politely remind you that sweeping statements and allegations based purely



on conjecture and deformation will be dealt with accordingly."

Unison are taking the case to an employment tribunal.

• Follow them on twitter: @KinsleyCandD

Durham teaching assistants reject offer

By Gemma Short

Durham teaching assistants fighting a change in their contracts which will see some lose more than 20% of their pay, have been offered a new deal by the council.

However the offer makes little movement on previous ones, and looks set to be rejected by teaching assistants. One teaching assistant

told a local newspaper "We will now vote on the proposals and if, as the feedback [on Facebook] suggests, they are rejected, we will vote to strike. This is not a decision we will take lightly as it will have a huge impact on families, but we feel that we have no choice."

After an article in the *Guardian* about the teaching assistants' struggle, their fundraiser jumped from £2500 to £23,000. They have re-

ceived a wide range of support from the local community and from across the labour movement.

Teaching assistants will be holding a rally at the Miners' Hall in Durham at 7pm on Wednesday 21 September. All are welcome to attend.

• Follow their struggle and donate to the fund: facebook.com/DCCstopandthink

Post office workers to strike on 15 September

By Peggy Carter

Thousands of post office workers will strike on Thursday 15 September against an attack on their job security and pensions.

Workers are facing a round of cuts which will see 2000 job losses, further privatisation of branches, and changes to pensions which will leave them tens of thousands of pounds worse off in retirement.

Their union, the CWU, is calling on the government to step in to stop the cuts and work out a strategy to save the Post Office. CWU general secretary Dave Ward said: "The Post Office cannot pretend that using public money to pay off staff so they can be replaced with minimum wage jobs is a success story or that closing down its flagship branches is a defence of the service."

Post Office managers have been trying to break the union by offering workers money not to strike and threatening to make CWU reps redundant.

CWU deputy general secretary (postal) Terry Pullinger said "It is incredible that a publicly owned company is behaving this way and the government has got to make clear that this is completely unacceptable."

TUC wrings its hands

By a delegate

TUC Congress gathered in Brighton from Sunday 11 September for its annual hand-wringing, avoiding the difficult questions and failing to provide the leadership necessary in these tumultuous times.

Congress was dominated by the aftermath of the Brexit debate. A composite motion, while claiming that workers should not pay for Brexit, failed to say who (the bosses, the government) would have to pay. Instead it pledged the TUC to "work with employers and the UK government to this end, promoting British businesses around the world", precisely the kind of social partnership approach that was disastrous, not only in recent referendums but also in industrial relations.

Most leading union bureaucrats studiously avoided mentioning Jeremy Corbyn or anything about the leadership contest. Unlike past Labour leaders, Corbyn was not invited to address the whole Congress and instead had only the General Council dinner. However many left delegates used their speeches to name-check Corbyn positively and talk about the possibilities the movement around his leadership is generating.

On the Trade Union Act, there was a wide consensus that the TUC bureaucracy had spent too much time celebrating small concessions as major victories, while the central attacks on voting thresholds, and picketing had

been imposed are now on the statute book. The best delegates said that unions needed to be discussing how to defy the new anti-union laws, not how to implement them.

The biggest row was around a TSSA resolution on climate change. The motion was generally benign, but included a line on stopping airport expansion. The Balpa pilots' union amendment took out this line but left the rest intact. The GMB and Unite got Balpa to withdraw their amendment, so that they could oppose the whole resolution. This was part of a wider drive by some union leaders to downgrade climate change. Sadly, they succeeded in voting down the motion and setting back union action on climate change.

The SWP and Socialist Party excelled in their disconnection from reality. For the SWP, the junior doctors' dispute and the Deliveroo victory were sufficient to overturn the lowest strike figures for generations. Socialist Party speakers told delegates not to be downbeat about Brexit, because at least it had brought the downfall of Cameron and Osborne.

It was pointed out that the result was a more right-wing government, which had no idea where it was going with Brexit but was very happy to continue with attacks on workers.

What is needed is honest assessments of the situation, followed by vigorous intervention in the class struggle.



Solidarity

For a workers' government

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ORGANISE THE UNORGANISED

The Bakers, Food, and Allied Workers' Union has been organising the "Hungry for Justice" campaign and unionising fast-food workers. Steve, the branch secretary of the Scarborough Wetherspoons BFAWU branch, spoke to *Solidarity*.

Hungry for Justice got us active around issues at work. They're the only reason this sector is organised.

Our branch got started on the back end of last year. We were having some issues with not getting our full entitlement to food discounts; we were only getting a couple of days' notice on our rota instead of two weeks; and we were being called along to meetings but we weren't being paid for our time there. Those were the three main things.

We started off in my workplace,

and we put together a list of all the issues we were having. We got people to join the union based on people putting in a grievance on these issues. We got about 10% of the pub in the union to begin with.

We had a Facebook message thread for all members. We used it to put out minutes from meetings. One new member, it turned out, took that thread, printed it off, and gave it to the pub manager. The manager blew up and dragged us into work on our day off. One member had already rung me up in tears, to say the boss was screaming about the union stuff.

The behaviour of the manager was disgraceful. She brought up a worker's previous suicide attempt to blackmail them to quit the union and accused us of bullying her! But she knew that her actions were out of order. The result of this whole confrontation was that the management conceded the demands that we had.

Around this time, we were doing street activity in the town



centre around the demand for a £10/hour minimum wage. As part of a global day of action, in solidarity with the movement in the US, we did a demo in Scarborough. We have open meetings where anyone from any of their workplaces can come along, including community activists, Labour Party activists and so on.

As part of this broad campaign, we went into KFC and spoke to the staff there. It turned out that KFC didn't pay their staff after 10pm. KFC shut at 9pm — the boss expected them to be done closing up by 10pm, but if they weren't done, they'd be kept behind to finish without pay.

Staff were apprehensive about taking the issue up at first, but we did a demo outside. I went in to speak to the management in the store, while the demo was on out-

side. The boss was very surprised, and said that this practice would end.

After that, we started meeting KFC staff, one-on-one, and helping them take their issues in hand. One worker emerged as an organiser, and then we had seven KFC workers along to our next open meeting. Now they've got a grievance together and they're going to put it in. It's about people not being paid properly, and a poor system of rectifying pay errors, so you can wait a month to get money back after a mistake; and people are in the same grade but on different pay rates.

There has been a bit of union busting, too. The last meeting they had, the restaurant manager told the staff that if they were found to be in the union, their hours would be cut to zero. That's why they

have zero-hour contracts!

For me, the importance of the international day of action is to say that we're the same as the guys out in the US. We've got shit money on a shit job. It's like that across the world, we're all the same, we're all getting shafted. We want to show the American workers how much they are leading.

If you're interested in helping the Hungry for Justice campaign, the best place to start is with your own issues in your own workplace.

Join the BFAWU and contact your local rep or official. Make headway where you work, then go out and tackle the rest of the world!

• Follow the campaign on twitter: @FastFoodRights

TORIES OUT

AUSTERITY HAS FAILED

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION | SUNDAY 2 OCTOBER 2016

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CALLED BY THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY & MIDLANDS TUC
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Printed by Trinity Mirror